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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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TRAVEL USA

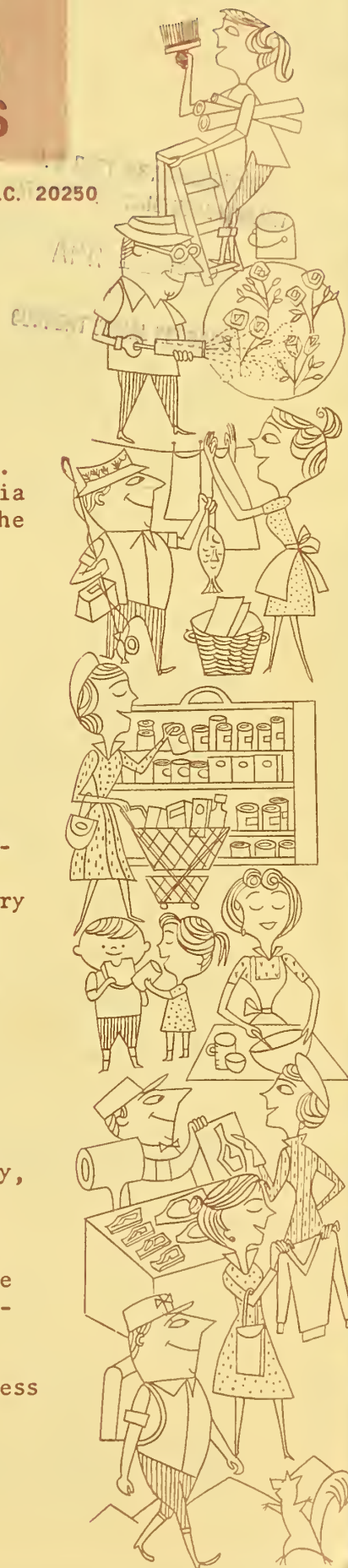
It's Azalea Time! Come to Washington, D. C. in late April to mid-May for azalea time at the National Arboretum, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Located on the edge of the Anacostia River and the Baltimore Parkway, in the northeast section of the Nation's Capital, the Arboretum is an oasis of 415 acres of nature's beauty. The most spectacular display of the National Arboretum covers the slopes of Mount Hamilton. More than 70,000 hybrid azaleas produce their colorful blooms beneath a canopy of tulip, oak, and dogwood trees. It is open to the public from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on weekends.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Food Stamp Progress. Over 2.2 million needy people in low-income families in 41 states and the District of Columbia benefited from the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Program in January. May 1968 will mark the seventh anniversary of the program. The continuing expansion program is reaching more families each month. Food stamps enable low-income families to increase their food purchasing power by investing their own money in food coupons worth more than they cost. The coupons are spent like cash for food at retail food outlets authorized under the program.

SUGARING OFF DAYS

More and Sweeter Syrup Coming Up. If you're from sugar country, you know, sugaring off days are nearly upon us. Warm days and chilly nights make the sap rise in the sugarbush; and this reminds us--U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists have been working to devise more efficient and economical ways to produce maple syrup for consumers. They have been concentrating on improving sap collection systems and on selecting and breeding trees which will produce the sweetest possible end product. More than 21,000 trees have been screened, to date, for sweetness of sap. This delectable project is being conducted jointly, at Burlington, Vermont, by the Forest Service's Northeastern Experiment Station, the University of Vermont, and field researchers from state organizations of the New England area, New York and Pennsylvania.



FOOD STANDARDS

To Protect Consumers. International standards for processed fruits and vegetables are being drafted by delegates from the United States and 17 other countries. U. S. Department of Agriculture representatives report that these food standards are designed to aid in the protection of the consumer's health. Uniform standards will also tend to facilitate world trade. Minimum requirements for uniformity are sought for hygiene, composition, and labeling of the same kinds of food from different countries. Standards for 26 processed fruits and vegetables are now in process of development. Others will be undertaken at a later date. The delegates on processed fruits and vegetables will have their next annual meeting in May under the auspices of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization. International standards applicable to various food products are likewise being developed by other Committees established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

U. S. PRODUCTS ABROAD

To Promote Trade. Trade fairs and food exhibits have become a highly developed and critical tool in the U. S. Department of Agriculture's drive to expand competitive over-seas markets for American farm products. Consumers and tradesmen in 13 countries on 3 continents will be offered a wide variety of American foods on a full schedule through trade fairs and promotions during '68. Consumer response to past campaigns has encouraged a number of foreign retail chains to set up tie-in campaigns with the '68 fairs. Portion-controlled foods and menu planning will be demonstrated on an institutional level. Fashion shows are planned for cotton and leather wear. Outdoor food stands will sell popcorn, hot dogs, fried chicken and other American snacks. Some of the food shows allow visitors to shop in fully-stocked American style self-service stores. Trade contracts, extremely important to the U. S. balance of payment interests, are frequently stimulated by such promotional campaigns.

THE EATING-OUT PATTERN

Maybe It's Not Home Cooking. Know the retail value of eating out? About \$22 billion a year--in food and non-alcoholic beverages alone! That's the value of what's consumed in more than 371,000 away-from-home eating establishments, according to a new report by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The survey did not include elementary, secondary schools, correctional institutions, commercial passenger carriers, Federal hospitals and boarding houses. IF they were included--imagine the total figures!

APRIL PLENTIFULS

Your Best Buys. Turkeys will be the feature item for April. Other plentifuls will be: pork, milk and dairy products, peanuts and peanut products, North Pacific halibut steaks, and potatoes.

VACATION TIME AHEAD

Recreation Down on the Farm. Look for a little green and white sign--it's an open door to 12,000 farms in 33 states (mainly in the midwest) to land available for public use--hunting, fishing, trapping and hiking. Many farmers have signed agreements with the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Cropland Adjustment Program to allow visitors to enjoy farm recreation--at no charge. Public access farms are marked with the green and white sign, announcing that the land is available. A call at the farm residence should proceed a visit to the land. Under this program, farmers also receive assistance in applying wildlife conservation measures that improve recreational opportunities on their land. These farms may be located by contacting any Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service County office.

RESEARCH

A Raisin Paste. A new raisin paste that stays spreadable has been developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists. Before this new paste was developed each baker had to grind his own raisins; a costly and time consuming process in making sticky buns and delectable Danish pastry. The secret was in the heating, either before or after grinding. Now the heat-treated paste remains soft, spreadable and keeps its natural color during at least six months of storage. Raisin Danish pastry and other pastries using the raisin paste are being used in increasing volume by bakers. This will also increase the demand for raisins, an excellent source of iron and calcium.

FOR HOME USE

Household Sanitation. Don't share an infection--it's all too easy. Disinfection may prevent the spread of infection from one member of the family to another by dishes, glasses, laundry and other household items, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Disinfectants and germicidal-cleaners found on the shelves of supermarkets bearing a USDA Reg. No. may be useful adjuncts to ordinary household cleaning routines. Labels must bear adequate directions for effective and safe use. Many abrasive kitchen cleaners, laundry bleaches, toilet bowl cleaners and other household preparations will disinfect if properly used.

DON'T SAVE PESTICIDES

Basic Rules of Safety. Any pesticide--insecticide, herbicide, fungicide, etc.--left over from last year should be carefully disposed of according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. If the container has lost its label--dispose of it! And don't save or reuse empty pesticide containers. A basic rule in pesticide safety is to read and follow directions and precautions on the container label. Do it each time you use a pesticide; don't rely on your memory. Always remember that many pesticides can be harmful to people--and pets--around the home and garden, IF, they are not handled, applied, and stored with care and caution. Safe storage is particularly important to avoid accidents involving young children.

A WORD TO THE WISE

Three Leaves... If it has three leaves--let it be! It's probably poison ivy. Each year, poison ivy and poison oak plants cause nearly 2 million cases of skin poisoning serious enough to require either medical attention or at least one day of restricted activity, or both, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Roaming youngsters are the most frequent victims. But no age group and few individuals are immune. In a new pamphlet titled 3 Leaves Mean Poison Ivy, the USDA advises that identification and eradication are the keys to poison plant control. Once recognized, these plants can be safely and effectively eradicated from backyards, gardens, playgrounds, and other recreational areas by using suggested weed killing chemicals known as herbicides. A single copy of PA #839, 3 Leaves Mean Poison Ivy may be obtained by writing to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. Please include your zip code.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Did You Know? Which is the best buy--blade chuck roast or shoulder arm roast? Blade chuck is more tender, but the shoulder arm has more meat and less waste according to a new bulletin by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The shoulder arm requires only one-half pound per serving against three-fourths pound per person for blade chuck. USDA Prime grade beef is the ultimate in tenderness, but most consumers find the next grade, USDA Choice, very desirable. Many more thrifty shoppers like USDA Good grade beef because it usually is more lean. These and other tips on how to buy--and cook--different cuts of beef and how to learn to judge beef quality is explained in How To Buy Beef Roasts, Home and Garden Bulletin, No. 146, available by postcard request from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. Please include your zip code.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Learn How Meat Is Graded. From feedlot to packing plant to supermarket and back to her own kitchen--the American housewife can see the complete trip in the new film on grading and inspecting beef produced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The 13 minute color movie, "A Mark of Quality" explains how the homemaker can use USDA grades; Prime, Choice and Good. The film is available to groups by contacting the film library at most State Universities. It is also available to the public for loan or purchase by contacting the Motion Picture Service, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

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